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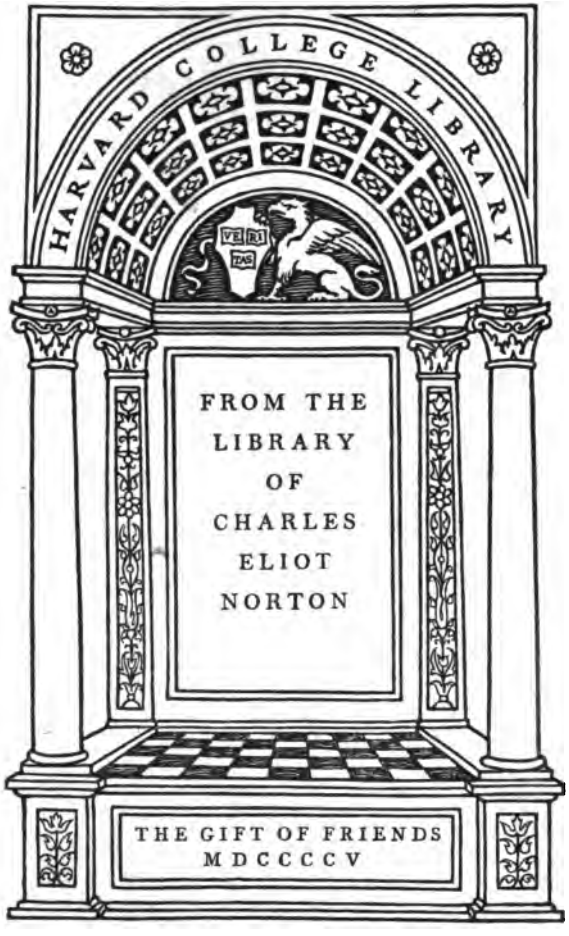

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THE MOSAIC SABBATH;

OR,

An Inquiry

INTO

THE SUPPOSED PRESENT OBLIGATION

OF THE

SABBATH OF THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT.

BY A LAYMAN,

AUTHOR OF "THE SABBATH; OR, AN EXAMINATION OF THE SIX TEXTS COMMONLY ADDUCED FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT IN PROOF OF A CHRISTIAN SABBATH."

LONDON:

CHAPMAN AND HALL, 186 STRAND.

1850.

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AN EXAMINATION OF THE SIX TEXTS COMMONLY ADDUCED FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT IN PROOF OF A CHRISTIAN SABBATH.

BY A LAYMAN.

Do the Christian Scriptures warrant the belief that Christians are under a religious obligation to observe a Sabbath? The Author maintains they do not.

"This question is discussed calmly and fairly, and the Author has certainly a great show of reason on his side; but we must refer those to the book itself who would enter fully into the merits of the inquiry."—*Westminster Review for January* 1850.

". . . . . A very elaborate, controversial, critical, and minute examination of the Six Texts which are supposed to justify Sunday observance. . . . . A calmly reasoned, well-written work, composed in a spirit worthy of the solemn theme it treats."—*The Economist of 29th June*, 1850.

PREFACE.

WHOEVER commences author in his old age, will do well, I find, to be cautious ere he promise in his first work the completion of a second. Yet I thought I might venture in my first volume of "The Sabbath" to speak of a second volume (which was to treat of the Sabbaths of the Old Testament), as a work in progress; for it was then, and had been for a considerable time previously, prepared in rough manuscript. I could not, however, refer to it as a work already written, because I was well aware that the manuscript would require much correction on revision, and that in the course of that revision I should have to make many additions to it, the results of further reflection on the subject. Even now, I must speak of my intended second volume only as of a work in progress, and which I sometimes despair, and always strongly feel the uncertainty, of living to complete.

I should probably, however, have continued uninterruptedly in the slow but even tenor of my way, had it not been for the public attention now given

to the Sabbath question, in consequence of the late vote of the House of Commons respecting Sunday labour in the Post-office.

To me, as an aged anti-Sabbatarian,

> "'Tis pleasant through the loopholes of retreat
> To peep at . . . . . the stir
> Of the great Babel,"

occasioned by the conflict which has so suddenly sprung up with that well-organised and powerful League of zealots, who are employing every species of agitation they can devise for accomplishing their ultimate object, of making the Sabbath of the Fourth Commandment the law of the land.

In contemplating the progress of this conflict, which turns entirely on the alleged obligation of that commandment upon Christians, I have thought I might aid in bringing it to a just issue, if, without waiting to complete my second volume, I were to publish separately that chapter in it which discusses the question as to the present obligation of the Mosaic Sabbath. I publish it, therefore; but protesting at the same time against the claim of the Sabbatarians to appeal to the Jewish Scriptures in proof of a Christian Sabbath. In the Christian Scriptures, if anywhere, that proof ought to be found; and there it is not.

July 1850.

INTRODUCTION.

At the conclusion of my former treatise on the subject of the Sabbath, I stated that the Sabbatarians* appeal to the Fourth Commandment of the Decalogue, and to a Sabbath-command alleged to have been given at the creation, as affording proof, in conjunction with the evidence adduced by them from the New Testament, that Christians are under a religious obligation to observe a seventh-day Sabbath.

This appeal of the Sabbatarians to the Sabbaths of the Jewish Scriptures is a tacit admission by them that their proof from the Christian Scriptures is defective.

The appeal is the more remarkable, inasmuch as the appellants cannot point out any special foundation

* I shall here, as in my former treatise, for the sake of brevity, designate the advocates of a Sunday Sabbath as Sabbatarians, although in strictness this is a name more properly applicable—and as such it was heretofore applied—to those Christians who observed a Saturday and not a Sunday Sabbath—a sect not yet entirely extinct among us.

laid for it in the Christian Scriptures. For wherever the New Testament makes mention of the Sabbath commanded in the Decalogue, it is always in reference to the Jews only, and without any intimation that the command was, or would become, obligatory upon Christians; and nowhere in the Christian Scriptures is any mention made of a Sabbath-command given at the creation. The only passage in the New Testament that makes any allusion to the text in Genesis which is supposed to enjoin the observance of a Sabbath, "And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it" (ii. 3), occurs in the Epistle to the Hebrews; and there the writer refers only to God's rest; and so far from noticing the text in Genesis as a command to mankind to observe a present Sabbath, he appeals to that text solely on account of its affording an assurance to the faithful that they shall enjoy God's Sabbath in the world to come (Heb. iv. 4).

The discussion in the following pages is confined to the question respecting the Sabbath of the Fourth Commandment.

THE MOSAIC SABBATH.

THAT the Decalogue, the Fourth Commandment of which enjoins the observance of a seventh-day Sabbath, was at first intended for the use and guidance of the Jews only would be readily admitted to me; but I would rather prove the fact than take it upon admission, because that proof will be found to afford a strong presumption that the Decalogue could never have been intended for any other people than the Jews, even in after times.

Let us begin by looking at the *internal* evidence which the Decalogue itself contains upon the subject.

1. The Decalogue is addressed to the Jews, and to them only; the word THOU, which pervades the whole of it, meaning the Jewish people: this is clear from the First Commandment, where it is said, "Who brought *thee* out of the land of Egypt." Hence we are inevitably led to the conclusion that the Decalogue, as a whole, was intended then and thereafter for that people only, unless there be clear Scripture proof to the contrary, which there is not.

2. The Second Commandment, "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image," was particularly applicable to the Jewish people, and was, we may believe, specially directed against their natural propensity to idolatry, a propensity which was never more strikingly manifested than at the very time when the Ten Commandments were given to them. For the narrative tells us, that whilst Moses was in the Mount to receive from the hands of God the tables of stone whereon was inscribed, as one of those commandments, the prohibition from making and bowing down to idols, the people were engaged, and, strange as it may appear, with the assistance of Aaron, in making for themselves a golden calf, and had worshipped it ere Moses had descended from the Mount.

Moreover, the reason assigned in this commandment for the prohibition from idol-worship, "I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God," stamps the commandment with an impress exclusively appropriate to the people to whom it was addressed. For the God of Israel, although not different in his essence, was very different in his attributes, from the God of the Gospel dispensation. The God there proclaimed is not, like the God of the Second Commandment, a jealous God, whose very name is Jealous.* The God of the Gospel dispensation does not, as does the God of Israel, notice the existence of other gods. He owns no rivals of whom he is jealous. He gives no command to destroy the idols of the Gentiles and break

* "Thou shalt worship no other God, for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a Jealous God" (Exod. xxxiv. 14).

down their altars. The spread of the Gospel effected that object, but not by direct aggression. The Gentiles were to be converted by the preaching of the Gospel, and becoming converts to it, they, by necessary consequence, abandoned their idols and their altars, and heathen worship thus fell gradually into decay, and at length ceased altogether wherever the Gospel was made known. With the Israelites the case was the reverse of this. They were not to proselyte the heathen nations to the worship of the true God. They were expressly commanded to destroy idols, altars, and groves; but the command extended no further. To have made converts of the heathens would have been to lose their own privilege in the worship of Jehovah, and to render vain his promise to them that he would be especially their God; and, therefore, to maintain that the Second Command of the Decalogue was, upon the promulgation of the Gospel, to become a part of the Christian code, is, in any consistent view of the question, impossible.

3. The Jews held the name of the Lord their God, JEHOVAH, in such reverence, that they never pronounced it, but used instead of it the words Adonai and Elohim;* and if, as some are of opinion, the Third Commandment was a prohibition from pronouncing the awful name of Jehovah, and not a prohibition from false swearing,†—an opinion which is the

* "Archæological Dictionary," by the Rev. T. Wilson. Second edition. 1793.

† "It is well known that the version of the Pentateuch called the Septuagint was anciently translated from the Hebrew into

more probable from the circumstance of there being among the moral commandments of the Decalogue an express command against giving false testimony—then the Third Commandment also must have been designed exclusively for Jewish observance, it being

the Greek language by certain Jews, either for the use of Ptolemy Philadelphus, or of their countrymen residing at Alexandria. When those persons came to the translation of the word Jehovah, they found themselves in a difficulty, for it was an acknowledged doctrine of their religion, never disputed by any of their prophets or priests, that this name, by which God had thought proper to designate himself in the third verse of the sixth chapter of Exodus, ought never to be written or spoken upon any occasion except the most awful and important; and it is the use or abuse of this particular name of God to which the Jews always understood the command of the Decalogue to apply which we render by the words, 'Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain,' but which ought to be rendered, Thou shalt not take the name of Jehovah thy God in vain. This word Jehovah was inscribed on the golden plate on the forehead of the high-priest when he entered the Holy of Holies, and also on his breastplate; and lest it should suffer any change, it was written in the Samaritan letters, those in which the Pentateuch was originally written, and from which it was translated into Hebrew by Ezra, after the captivity. In the time of St. Jerome it still continued written, in many Hebrew and Greek Bibles, in the Samaritan character. When the Jews came to this word in their translation, in order to avoid the profaneness of writing it literally, they adopted the Greek word Κύριος, or Lord, and thus got over the difficulty. But this contrivance does not in any way alter the nature of the command of the Decalogue."—Extracted from paragraph 81 of "Horæ Sabbaticæ," a short but very able treatise on the Sabbath question, by the late Godfrey Higgins, Esq.

inapplicable to any other people, either when the command was given or in any after time.

But even if the Third Commandment be not a prohibition from pronouncing the name of Jehovah, but merely a prohibition from swearing falsely by it, this construction of the commandment would equally bear evidence of its being applicable to the Jewish people only. For the commandment so construed would be, "Thou shalt not swear falsely by the name of the God of Israel," the God who proclaims to the people of Israel in his first Commandment, "I am the Lord thy God." The Third Commandment, therefore, was designed for no other people. If we who are descended from the heathens forbear from swearing falsely by the name of the Lord our God, the God of the Christian dispensation, we thereby act indeed in the spirit of the Third Commandment, but not in obedience to it. We invoke not the name of Jehovah.

4. The remind given to the Israelites in the Fourth Commandment (in Deuteronomy), that they had been servants in Egypt, and were on that account to keep the Sabbath, is a strong indication, or rather, I ought to say, a conclusive proof, that the Fourth Commandment of the Decalogue could not have been designed for observance by any other people.

5. The reward promised for obedience in the Fifth Commandment was applicable to the Israelites, and to them only. It is, "That thy days may be prolonged, and that it may go well with thee in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." This land was Canaan.

Such internal evidence is there that the Decalogue was intended solely for the use of the Jewish people. Of the force of this evidence, in one of the instances of it, our Church makes once a-week an ample, though only an implied confession, by the voice of her officiating ministers, when, in performing the Communion Service, they proclaim from the altar, "God spake these words, and said, I am the Lord thy God; thou shalt have none other gods but me." Now these are not the words which God spake and said. They are, "I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage; thou shalt have none other gods but me." All that God thus said relating to his deliverance of the people to whom he spake from the yoke of their Egyptian bondage, is omitted in the commandment as given out from the altar; and is so, most assuredly, for this reason, and for no other, that the suppressed passage relates only to the Jewish people. Yet, this passage being a part of the words which God spake, and occurring as it does in the very middle of the sentence which God spake, the officiating minister is by the forms of the Church service made to say, in effect, that which is false. True it is that God did speak the words which the minister repeats, but equally true is it that God spake others also: and what, I ask, would be thought of the witness who, in giving testimony to that which he heard another person say, should state very faithfully a portion of what was said, but for a purpose of his own omit to state the whole of it? Now the passage in

the commandment omitted by the minister, because it relates only to the Jews, is omitted for the purpose of turning the attention of the congregation aside for the time from the inference which might otherwise present itself to them, that the Decalogue was addressed to and intended for the Jews alone.

Let us now proceed to the consideration of the *external* evidence on this point. In the Jewish Scriptures we find the following:—

1. The Decalogue was proclaimed from Mount Sinai, and by the voice of God, in the presence of all the people of Israel, they having, by previous command, assembled before the mount to witness the awful phenomena which prevailed while He spake those words; and into their custody were delivered the tables of stone, which were subsequently made, whereon those words were inscribed. The Decalogue thus specially given to them forms a part of that great mass of statutes and judgments usually called the Law, or Mosaic dispensation, as distinguished from the Gospel, or Christian dispensation, by which it was eventually superseded.

2. The Law was given to the Israelites, as being God's chosen people. That the Israelites, or Jews, as their descendants were called in after-times, were a peculiarly favoured nation, a chosen people, the only people whom God was pleased to dwell amongst and to instruct in religious and moral duties, is an historical fact so clearly apparent from the whole scope and tenor of the books of the Old Testament, and more particularly from the five books of Moses, that

no one who believes in those books denies it. Yet it may be well to call to mind the strong and emphatic language in which the Divine preference of the Jewish people above all other nations is there recorded, and I shall therefore transcribe, from the books of Exodus and Deuteronomy, some of the most remarkable passages upon the subject.

In Exodus (xxix. 45), the Almighty declares himself as peculiarly the God of Israel: "I will dwell amongst the children of Israel, and will be their God." Nor is this declaration by the Almighty of his intention to dwell amongst them to be understood as referring to his omnipresence; it refers to a personal residence, specially vouchsafed to the children of Israel, and never, at any time, to any other people upon earth. "Let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell amongst them," is the direction in Exodus, xxv. 8; and accordingly a tabernacle was made and set up, in an interior compartment of which dwelt the God of Israel.*

* Dr. Jennings, in his "Jewish Antiquities," when treating of the form of government established over the Israelites after their departure from Egypt, and which has since been designated a Theocracy, has, in vol. i. 21, the following passage in reference to the Divine presence of the God and King of Israel amongst his people:—"He was their proper king, the sovereign of their body politic, in which character he gave them judicial or political laws relating to government and civil life. He ordered a royal palace to be built for his residence among them, I mean the tabernacle, in which he dwelt, or manifested his special presence by the Shechinah, as the Jews call it; that is, by a bright cloud or glory appearing over the mercy-seat, betwixt the two cherubim in

In the book of Deuteronomy we find, that when Moses forbids the Israelites from intermarrying with other nations, he tells them, "The Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth" (vii. 6).

Still more emphatically, and it might almost be said affectionately, is the divine partiality for that people testified in the nineteenth chapter of Exodus, where God himself is represented as calling unto Moses out of Mount Sinai, "saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel; Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings and brought you unto myself. Now, therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people" (3—5).

Further: in the fourth chapter of Deuteronomy, Moses thus earnestly and eloquently reminds the Israelites of the distinguished favour manifested towards them by their God: "Now therefore hearken, O

the innermost room of that palace (Levit. xvi. 2),—on which account he is said to dwell betwixt the cherubim (Ps. lxxx. 1), and to sit betwixt the cherubim (Ps. xcix. 1)."

Here let me point attention to the remarkable fact (remarkable with reference to the conclusion that the Decalogue was, as it were, the peculiar property of the Jewish people), that the mercy-seat, where visibly present dwelt the God and King of Israel, rested on the ark of the covenant, the "covenant made with Israel" (Exod. xxxiv. 27); and in that ark, by express command, were deposited the tables of stone inscribed with the Ten Commandments (Exod. xxv. and xxxi., and Deut. ix.)

Israel, unto the statutes and unto the judgments, which I teach you" (ver. 1). "Keep, therefore, and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people. For what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon him for? And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?" (6, 7, 8.) "For ask now of the days that are past, which were before thee, since the day that God created man upon the earth, and ask from the one side of heaven unto the other, whether there hath been any such thing as this great thing is, or hath been heard like it? Did ever people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as thou hast heard, and live? Or hath God assayed to go and take him a nation from the midst of another nation, by temptations, by signs, and by wonders, and by war, and by a mighty hand, and by a stretched out arm, and by great terrors, according to all that the Lord your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes? Unto thee it was showed, that thou mightest know that the Lord he is God" (32–35).

3. As a further proof of the design to give to the Jewish people an exclusive claim to those statutes and judgments which are comprised in the Decalogue, I shall next transcribe, omitting a verse that is merely parenthetical, the preamble by which the Decalogue

is introduced in the book of Deuteronomy. It is as follows: "*And Moses called all Israel, and said unto them, Hear, O Israel, the* STATUTES AND JUDGMENTS *which I speak in your ears this day, that ye may learn them, and keep, and do them. The Lord our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. The Lord made not this covenant* with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day. The Lord talked with you face to face in the mount out of the midst of the fire, saying.*"

Such is the solemn preamble to the Ten Commandments, set forth in the fifth book of Deuteronomy; and so exclusively are these "statutes and judgments" thereby addressed and given to the Jewish people.

4. Another proof that they were intended to be and to remain the possession and treasure of that people alone is the fact that, neither in the preamble above cited, nor elsewhere in all the five books of Moses, is there the slightest intimation manifested of the God of Israel having designed that other nations should adopt and obey those statutes and judgments, when they should hear of them. All that the heathens were to do was to admire that people, who were so favoured and so fortunate as to possess them: "The nations which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people." Neither, as before remarked, are the Israelites anywhere commanded to proselyte other nations. The command to break their idols in pieces,

* That "this covenant" refers to the Ten Commandments is sufficiently clear from the context; but see also Deut. ix. 9.

destroy their altars, and cut down their groves, was indeed a command to put down the worship of the gods of the heathens; but it was obviously given to the Israelites mainly for the purpose of preventing them from abandoning the worship of their own God (*see* Exodus, xxiii. 24, and xxxiv. 12–14). They are nowhere directed to invite or to compel the heathens to the worship of the God of Israel, or to the adoption of his statutes and judgments. Even at the distance of four hundred years after the promulgation of the law from Mount Sinai, the Psalmist is able to boast of the possession of those statutes and judgments as the peculiar privilege of his own nation: "He showeth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel. He hath not dealt so with any nation; and as for his judgments, they have not known them" (Ps. cxlvii. 19, 20).

5. The judgment or statute of the Fourth Commandment, in particular, seems to have been specially withheld from all other nations, and exclusively reserved to the children of Israel; for the Sabbath enjoined by that commandment was to be *a sign*, which was to distinguish them as a chosen people and a holy nation. In the thirty-first chapter of Exodus we read: "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my Sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you. Ye shall keep the Sabbath therefore; for it is holy unto you" (v. 12–14). "Wherefore the chil-

dren of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever" (v. 16, 17).

Now the Sabbath could not be a sign between God and the people of Israel, "unless" (as Dr. Paley remarks*) "the observance of it was peculiar to that people, and designed to be so." It may, indeed, be contended, that as the covenant, of which the Sabbath was the sign, came in its appointed time to an end, the sign might then cease to be peculiar to the Jewish people: but the language in which the promise of the sign is given is too pointedly applicable to that people only, for it to become applicable to any other; so that, if ever the Sabbath ceased to be a sign to the Jews, it ceased altogether as a sign; and, in consequence, the obligation to observe the Sabbath ceased also.

But further: the language in which the promise of the sign of the Sabbath is given, remarkable as it is for its strictly exclusive applicability to the Jewish race,† is rendered still more remarkable by the irresistible proof to which it leads, that the Sabbath of

* "Moral Phil." ii. 81.

† It would seem, from the Mosaic narrative of the Deluge, that when God is pleased to make a covenant with all mankind the sign of the covenant is of a nature commensurate with its purpose. Thus it is related, that when God declared to Noah, "the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh," he gave a sign as universal as the promise: "I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth" (Gen. ix. 13).

the Jews was never to become the Sabbath of the Christians. The language used in regard to the Sabbath is similar to that which is used in regard to other Jewish festivals. The covenant of which the Sabbath was to be the sign is spoken of as a perpetual covenant with the children of Israel throughout their generations—a sign between God and the children of Israel for ever. In like manner, it is said of the Feast of Unleavened Bread: "Ye shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread; for in this selfsame day have I brought your armies out of the land of Egypt: therefore ye shall observe this day in your generations by an ordinance for ever"* (Exod. xii. 17). Yet no Christian doubts but that, upon the promulgation of the Gospel, the Feast of Unleavened Bread, although directed to be observed as an ordinance for ever, ceased to be obligatory upon the Jews, and never became obligatory upon Christians. By parity of reasoning, the duty of observing the Feast of the Sabbath,† which was to be a sign between God and the children of Israel for ever, was, upon the promulgation of the Gospel, no longer obligatory upon that people, and could not become obligatory upon Christians, unless revived by a new command, which it never was.

Opposed to the evidence, internal and external, here adduced from the Jewish Scriptures, to prove

* So, also, it is said in the same chapter as to the day of the Passover: "This day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the Lord throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever" (v. 14).

† Levit. xxiii. 2, 3.

that the Decalogue was given to the Jewish people only, and never designed for any other, where is there any evidence to be found? Do we find it in the Christian Scriptures? Do we discover there any annunciation by Christ or his Apostles, or any just inference from his or from their teaching, that the time had then arrived when the Decalogue was to be the religious code of all mankind; or that the observance of the Sabbath command of the Decalogue, which God had solemnly declared should be a sign between him and his chosen people, had become the religious duty of all other people? Counter-evidence of this nature from the Christian Scriptures would, indeed, be irresistible; but, so far from finding any such in them, all the evidence to be collected from that source points directly the other way.

When "one came and said unto Jesus, Good Master, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?" Jesus said . . . . . "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the Commandments. He saith unto him, Which?" *All the Ten*, we may justly presume, would have been the answer, had Christ designed that the whole Decalogue should survive the Mosaic dispensation. Instead of this he replied, "Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother, and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Matt. xix. 16–19). Now the Fourth Commandment is excluded from the list of those of the Ten Commandments which Christ enumerated as essential to be observed, and conse-

quently there is the strongest reason for believing he intended that this commandment should not become obligatory upon all mankind when his Gospel would be preached to them.*

It will doubtless be objected, that if the Fourth Commandment be no longer obligatory, because it is not amongst those which Christ enumerated, neither can the three first commandments, which describe the duties to God. Do I mean to say, it may be asked, that those are no longer obligatory? Most certainly I do. For I contend that by the course which Christ adopted, when questioned upon the subject of commands relating to the duties of mankind towards God and towards each other, he clearly shows his intention to be, that none of the Ten Commandments, save those which he has selected, should be observed after his Gospel should be preached, and that he therefore purposely excludes the three first commandments from the list of commands which he enumerates as essential to be kept; and does so, because those three commandments were, as hath here been shown, applicable only to the Jews.

But is the Gospel code, as it regards our religious duties, on this account defective? Far otherwise. If Christians are not taught by Christ to look to the three first Commandments of the Decalogue for the

* The Tenth Commandment, although a moral commandment, is also omitted; but another moral command is substituted, which has some similarity to it: for if a man love his neighbour as himself he cannot harbour in his mind any design to injure his neighbour.

knowledge of their duty towards God, they are taught by him where they will find that knowledge. Thus, when one of the scribes asked of him, "Which is the first commandment of all?" instead of replying, "I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage; thou shalt have no other gods before me," he answers, "The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. This is the first commandment"* (Mark, xii. 28–30).

Most remarkable and significant is this answer from Christ. It is, when all circumstances are duly considered, tantamount to an express declaration by him, that the first of the three commandments, which in the Decalogue relate to the duty to God, and consequently the two others, they being also passed over unnoticed, were not suited to form a part of that code which thereafter, under the dispensation of his Gospel, was to be a rule of conduct in religion to all mankind; and were not suited for that purpose, because they were not, as the substituted command was, of universal application. Let every candid Sabbatarian ask himself the question, What could it profit a Christian to be under an obligation to observe the first commandment of the Decalogue? There is no duty enjoined or implied by that command which is not equally enjoined or implied by the substituted com-

* This command will be found in Deuteronomy, vi. 4, 5.

mand. There is no religious thought or devotional feeling suggested by the first commandment which is not equally suggested, and more emphatically impressed, by the substituted command. That command far more distinctly proclaims the unity of God, and it enjoins what the commandment in the Decalogue does not—the Christian duty of the love of God.

It may be remarked, and I readily admit, that as in the first commandment of the Decalogue, so in the substituted command, it is only the God of Israel that is there spoken of. "The Lord *thy* God" is the phrase used in both these commands. It could not be otherwise than that this should be the phrase, and this the meaning of it in any command selected from the statutes and judgments of the Mosaic law. It was evidently the design of Christ, in forming the religious and moral code of his Gospel dispensation, to adopt, as far as they might be consistent with the spirit of that code, the religious and moral precepts to be found in the law of the Mosaic dispensation. It cannot, therefore, invalidate any argument I have adduced in reference to the phrase, "the Lord *thy* God," to find that phrase in the command which Christ has substituted for the First Commandment in the Decalogue. He has transferred the command in Deuteronomy to the Gospel code, and thus "the Lord thy God" becomes the Lord our God, the God and Father of all mankind.

The intentions of Christ with respect to all the commandments of the Decalogue were made manifest by his mode of answering the questions put to him

on the subject of commandments. Never, when thus interrogated, did he enjoin the observance of the Decalogue as a whole. For our duty to God he made no reference to it, but quoted, instead, a command from the general mass of statutes and judgments in the old law. For our moral duties he drew his answer from the Decalogue, selecting from it five of the six moral commandments, and substituting for the Tenth Commandment, which is the sixth moral Commandment, a command in Leviticus, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."* Thus has he pointed out to us the sources to which we may look for instruction as to our religious and moral duties; but for the observance of a Sabbath, he neither quoted the Sabbath-command of the Decalogue, nor substituted any equivalent for it from any other portion of the Jewish Scriptures. To the text in Genesis, "God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it," he never once alludes in the whole course of his ministry.

The Sabbath-command of the Decalogue, in one very material circumstance, differs essentially from all the other nine—it is a positive or ceremonial law: the Sabbath itself being neither an innate religious duty, nor an obvious moral duty.† But supposing it to be, as some maintain it is, a moral duty, or if

* Levit. xix. 18.

† "That law is called *positive* which is not inbred, imprinted, or infused into the heart of man by nature or grace; but it is imposed by an external mandate of a lawgiver having authority to command. And it hath the name *positive* from external imposition or constitution, and because it is added to the law of Nature,

not so, a religious duty, as appertaining to the worship of God, the result is the same. If supposed to belong to that class of duties which relates to the worship of God, it is excluded by Christ from his Gospel dispensation, together with the three first commandments of the Decalogue; but it has not, as they have, another command substituted in its place. If supposed to belong to that class which relates to moral duties, it is excluded together with the Tenth Commandment; but is not, like that commandment, taught and enjoined by Christ in another form.*

and doth not necessarily spring from it."—"A Treatise of the Sabbath-day, by Dr. F. White, L. Bishop of Ely." London, 1636. P. 32.

"The distinction of the Sabbath is in its nature as much a positive ceremonial institution as that of many other seasons which were appointed by the Levitical law to be kept holy, and to be observed by a strict rest,—as the first and seventh days of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Pentecost, the Feast of Tabernacles; and in the twenty-third chapter of Exodus the Sabbath and these are recited together.—Paley's "Philos." ii. 81.

* It cannot but appear at first somewhat surprising, that in quoting the moral commands of the Decalogue Christ should have omitted the tenth; for it is a most admirable precept of moral duty. It does not in express terms prohibit the commission of the crimes mentioned in it,—they were already prohibited by preceding commandments, the seventh and eighth; but it does that which is still more effective, it prohibits the indulgence of any wish or thought of committing those crimes, thus in those instances striking at the very root of immorality and vice. Now, the command to love thy neighbour as thyself, which is substituted for the Tenth Commandment, although a precept of the highest excellence, is not an exact equivalent for it. What, then, may be the probable explanation of its omission?

Thus, from whatever point of view we look upon the Fourth Commandment of the Decalogue, it becomes apparent that the Sabbath enjoined by it has not been transferred by Christ to the code of Christian duties. If, therefore, there be nothing in the teaching of the Apostles after the death of Christ to contravene the proposition that Christ by his teaching manifested his intention that the Fourth Commandment should not become obligatory upon the converts made from the Gentiles, my proof of that proposition will be complete.*

May it not be that it has reference to two crimes only, adultery and theft; whereas the teaching of Christ extends the prohibibition of evil thoughts to every species of crime? So prominent a feature in his teaching is this useful precept in morals, that it is noticed by Paley and others as an evidence of the truth of the Gospel dispensation. "A second argument, drawn from the morality of the New Testament" (says Dr. Paley, in his "Evidences of Christianity," ii. 35) "is the stress which is laid by our Saviour upon the regulation of the thoughts" (Matthew, xv. 19, 23, 25, 27, and more particularly v. 28).

Hence it may be truly said, that the Tenth Commandment, which is the last of the six moral commandments of the Decalogue, has in effect, as the other five have expressly, been re-enacted.

* It would seem that, although Christ specifically enumerated the moral commands of the Decalogue as commandments essential to be observed, he nevertheless intended it should be inferred from the general tenor of his teaching on the subject of commands, that all our duties, both moral and religious, are in effect comprised in the two great commandments which, when questioned by the scribe, he selected from the Mosaic law: "The first of all the commandments," said Jesus, in reply, "is, Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the

What, then, did the Apostles collectively teach on the subject of the Commandments? Expressly they taught nothing, but impliedly they taught much; all indeed that is requisite as a sanction to the view here taken of what Christ himself had taught. For when they were appealed to upon the question, whether the Gentile converts were bound "to keep the law of Moses," they met in full conclave, and after some debate decreed as follows: "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; that ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication" (Acts, xv. 28, 29). Now, as the Decalogue was a part of the Law of Moses, it appears to be beyond all doubt, that if the Fourth Commandment was to be obligatory upon Christians, this was the occasion when the Gentile converts would have been informed of that obligation; yet no such information was given to them. Unless, therefore, it be contended, which it will not, that the Decalogue forms no part of the Law of Moses, the decree of the assembled Apostles is conclusive on the question of Christian obligation to keep the Fourth Commandment, and has taught us that no such obligation exists.

Next let us inquire, What say any of the Apostles

Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: *there is none other commandment greater than these*" (Mark, xii. 29–31).

individually as to the duty of Christians in reference to all or any of the Commandments? On looking to their Epistles, and to the history of their Acts, we find that not one of the Apostles mentions the Ten Commandments as a whole, and that only two, St. James and St. Paul, mention any of them in particular; and that they, like their great Master, notice only the moral commandments. St. James, in his General Epistle (ii. 11), refers to the Sixth and Seventh Commandments, and in v. 8, to "the royal law, according to the Scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." St. Paul refers to all the moral commandments. In Rom. xiii. 8, 9; he says, "He that loveth another hath fulfilled the law; for this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." St. Paul, it may be observed, omits in this enumeration the precept, Honour thy father and thy mother; but he introduces it in his Epistle to the Ephesians, making, however, such an alteration in the reason given for the command, as renders it of universal application: "Children, obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right. Honour thy father and mother (which is the first commandment with promise), that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth" (vi. 1–3). But further, St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Galatians, earnestly exhorts them to avail themselves of the liberty which

was given to them by the Gospel: "Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage" (v. 1). Again, in the same chapter (v. 13, 14), "For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another: for all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

Such is the teaching of St. Paul with reference to the Commandments. In no one of the passages here quoted, nor in any other part of his Epistles, nor in any of his discourses recorded in the Acts, has he enjoined the observance, or borne testimony to the obligation of the Fourth Commandment; and it were strange if any such injunction or testimony could be found in his Epistles or discourses, considering what he says on the subject of Sabbaths in his Epistle to the Colossians:—"Let no man, therefore, judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath-days," (ii. 16, 17). Here he expressly prohibits the censuring of any man on account of his not observing the Sabbath-days; and, by necessary consequence, we are thereby taught by him that the Sabbath of the Fourth Commandment had not become obligatory upon Christians.*

* St. Jerome, one of the most eminent of the Church fathers, says, there is no discourse by St. Paul in which he does not sedulously teach that by the grace of the Gospel all those

Thus it appears that the teaching of St. Paul and St. James, as it affects the question respecting the present obligation of the Fourth Commandment, is perfectly in accord with that of Christ himself, and consequently, bearing in mind that no other of the Apostles has ever noticed the Commandments of the Decalogue, and that the Apostles collectively have, by their divinely-sanctioned decree, proclaimed the great doctrine of Christian liberty in regard to the law of Moses, every candid reader must incline to admit the truth of my proposition, that the Mosaic Sabbath never became, and therefore cannot now, be obligatory upon Christians. Nevertheless, I cannot expect that my proof of it will be considered as entirely satisfactory unless I examine the arguments most usually advanced by Sabbatarians in support of their differing view of the question.

One of those arguments is, that although Christ never quoted nor made any actual mention of the Fourth Commandment, nevertheless, as he on several occasions reproved the unwarranted strictness with which the Sabbath enjoined by it was observed by the

things which lay in types and figures and amongst them, "the idleness of the Sabbath," had ceased: "Nullus quidem apostoli sermo est, vel per epistolam vel præsentis, in quo non laboret docere antiquæ legis onera deposita, et omnia illa quæ in typis et imaginibus præcesserunt, id est, *otium Sabbati*, circumcisionis injuriam, kalendarum, et trium per annum solemnitatum recursus, scrupulositatem ciborum et per dies singulos lavacra iterum sordidanda, gratiâ Evangelii subrepentè cessasse."—Jerome's Preface to his "Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians," vol. ix. p. 93, of the edition of his works by Erasmus.

Pharisees, and also as he relaxed the rigour of the command itself by setting an example of the non-observance of it in some particulars;* he thereby recognised its existence and authority as a command, and made manifest his intention that it should remain in full force, with the exception of such slight deviations from it as he had himself expressly sanctioned. No doubt Christ did thereby recognise the existence, and did not then distinctly bring into question the authority of the commandment; but in this there was nothing inconsistent with a design ultimately to abolish it. What he then did he might intend as a step towards the fulfilment of that design. It is remark-

* "The Sabbath-day under the law of Moses was required to be observed with a strictness, and the breach of it was punished with a severity, which may fairly be regarded as appertaining solely to the dispensation then in force. The commandment, 'In it thou shalt not do any work,' &c., as interpreted by the law, was far more rigid and comprehensive than it is possible for us to regard it as it is interpreted by the Gospel. Although our Saviour, the Lord of the Sabbath, made a clear exception in favour of works of mercy and necessity, it may be questioned whether such an exception (unless within narrow limits) was either contemplated by Moses or maintained by his followers."—"Brief Remarks on the History, Authority, and Use of the Sabbath," by Joseph John Gurney. Third Edition, 1832, p. 43. "The man who lay at the pool of Bethesda amidst a great multitude of impotent folk, blind, halt, and withered, had been afflicted with an infirmity for thirty and eight years. His cure was public and immediate. 'Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed and walk; and immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed and walked; and on the same day was the Sabbath. The Jews, therefore, said unto him that was cured, It is the Sabbath-day; it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed. He an-

able that he never takes occasion to express his approval of the Sabbath as a religious institution; yet when accused of having "broken the Sabbath," it would, humanly speaking, have been both natural and politic for him to profess his high veneration for it, if he so regarded it, and to remark, that he intended nothing more than to discountenance and censure its too rigorous observance. He seems, on the contrary, to have availed himself of every opportunity of showing, if not explicitly avowing, his disregard of the Sabbath.* It was peculiarly so in the instance of his healing on the Sabbath-day an infirmity which had

swered them, He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed and walk.' Between that carrying of burdens which belonged to the course of trade, and which was so severely reprobated by the prophets as a breach of the Sabbath, and the bearing away of the mattress on which this poor man was lying, and which might otherwise have been lost to him, the distinction is too obvious to need discussion. Still, the deed was a breach of the law of Moses, according to its literal exactness, and was, as well as the act of healing a chronic disease, directly opposed to the notions then prevalent among the Jews."—"Brief Remarks," p. 60.

"*In him*" (the Lord of the Sabbath) "*there dwelt an authority which sufficed, not merely for the lenient and merciful interpretation of the Sabbatical law, or for the relaxing of its literal rigour; but even, should he see meet, for its total abolition.*"—"Brief Remarks," p. 64.

* Sabbatarian writers affirm it to be a proof of Christ's observing the Sabbath, that on Sabbath-days he went into the synagogues. This is no evidence of his observing the Mosaic Sabbath as regards its prohibition from doing any work on the Sabbath-day.

existed for thirty-eight years,* an infirmity which apparently was not a painful disease, but merely a lameness. It undoubtedly was an act of charity to heal the sufferer on any day, but in such a case as this there could be no urgency, certainly not such as to call for a violation of the injunctions in the Fourth Commandment, and therefore, the day following the Sabbath, we may presume, would have been selected rather than the Sabbath-day, had Christ intended to make it manifest he considered those injunctions to be still of indispensable obligation. Moreover, it is to be recollected, that after healing the man, Christ bade him take up his bed and carry it away, which was a further violation of the Sabbath, and might, as well as the first violation of it, have been avoided by deferring the cure one day. It was in this case, where the cure performed on the Sabbath-day was neither a work of necessity nor an urgent work of charity, that Christ made the remarkable reply recorded in the seventeenth verse of the chapter: "Therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the Sabbath-day. But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." And true it is, as Origen has observed, in commenting upon this reply, "We see that God is continually working, and there is no Sabbath-day in which God doth not work, in which he doth not make his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and send rain on the just and on the unjust." (Semper enim

* John, v.

videmus Deum operari, et nullum Sabbatum est in quo Deus non operetur, in quo non producat solem suum super bonos et malos, et pluat super justos et injustos.—23d Homily In Numeros, sec. 4. De la Rue's edit. of Origen's Works; Paris, 1733).

The saying of Christ thus interpreted, and it appears to be a very proper interpretation, is equivalent to his telling the Jews: My Father worketh on the Sabbath-day and I likewise.

But, further, if the true inference from the teaching and example of Christ were, that he intended the Fourth Commandment, except as relaxed by him in favour of works of necessity and charity, should remain in force, with whom, I would ask, was it so to remain? Most indisputably with those upon whom it was already obligatory, and with no one else. It is a self-contradictory proposition to say it remained in force with any people who were not then subject to it—with the then Gentile world, who were ignorant of its existence, and with converts thereafter to be made from the Gentiles when the Gospel should be preached to them. It might, indeed, *become* obligatory upon those converts, and therefore upon Christians, in all succeeding times; but this could be only by a new commandment imposing that obligation upon them, and there is no such commandment.

On the supposition that the Fourth Commandment did become obligatory upon the Gentile converts, it would inevitably follow that those converts did, in obedience to the commandment, observe a

Sabbath. Is such the fact? I am not here speaking of the sanctification of a seventh day by prayer and religious instruction, but of a Sabbath in the proper sense of the word, a Sabbath observed by entire abstinence from work throughout the day, works of necessity and charity excepted. With this explanation of my meaning in the use of the word, I ask: Did the first converts from the Gentiles, the converts made in the Apostolic age of Peter and Paul, observe a Sabbath? They did not. This the Sabbatarians know full well, and therefore never hazard a direct assertion that they did.

Whether the Fourth Commandment remained in force with the converts made from the Jews, is a question in which we of the Gentile race are not essentially concerned, yet it deserves consideration. It is antecedently in the highest degree probable that no difference would be made, in this respect, between the two sets of converts. But we have no need to rely on mere probability. The question is decided by the indisputable fact that St. Paul, himself a Jew, did not, after his conversion, believe that he continued under the obligation to observe the Sabbath of the Fourth Commandment, and that, consistently with the belief that he was no longer under such obligation, he, in his Epistle to the Colossians, in the passage recently cited from it, forbids the censuring of any man on account of his not being an observer of Sabbath-days.

Another argument with Sabbatarians is that which they draw from the fact, that the Ten Commandments

were proclaimed to the children of Israel by the voice of God himself, and amidst the most awful display of his power and greatness, whilst all the other statutes and judgments were communicated only by Moses. Hence it is argued that the Ten Commandments were of superior sanctity, and on that account destined to be of perpetual duration, although all the rest of the ordinances comprised in the Mosaic dispensation were in due time to come to an end. But for this opinion we find no warrant in Scripture. Not the slightest intimation of any such intended distinction and preference is there to be traced. It is a fancy of modern theorists, and nothing more. As well might they argue that the tables of stone on which the Ten Commandments were inscribed, and which "were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God,"* would endure for ever; yet they perished in a day, broken by the hands of man. Why then may we not believe that the Commandments "graven upon the tables" were like all the other statutes and judgments of the Mosaic law intended to endure but for a season, except such as were expressly or impliedly re-enacted by the Founder of the Gospel dispensation, by which the Mosaic dispensation was superseded?

What essential difference, in point of authority or sanctity, can be rationally imagined to exist between a set of laws proclaimed by the voice of God to the people of Israel, and another set proclaimed to them

* Exod. xxxii. 16.

at his command by the voice of Moses?—between those statutes and judgments which were proclaimed from the mount and those which were dictated in the mount? All that was spoken by Moses to the people was prefaced by a declaration that it came from God. Almost immediately following the Ten Commandments in Exodus we read: "And the Lord said unto Moses, Thus thou shalt say unto the children of Israel" (Exod. xx. 22).—"Now these are the judgments which thou shalt set before them" (xxi. 1). In Leviticus, "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel," is constantly occurring as the preface to a further set of commands to them.

The evidence from Scripture is decisive against any distinction as to their authority or sanctity between the Ten Commandments and the Mosaic ordinances. All pass equally under the name of the Law. St. Paul refers to the moral commands in the Decalogue as the Law;* while, on the other hand, in St. John's Gospel we read of John the Baptist bearing witness that "the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."† Surely the law here said to have been given by Moses must include whatever statutes and judgments he himself delivered to the children of Israel. Again; in the Epistles to the Hebrews (x. 1), we read, "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those

* Romans, ii. & vii. † John, i. 17.

sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect." Here we see, that although only the ceremonial part of the Mosaic ordinances is referred to, it is called the Law.

But there is yet a higher sanction for applying this phrase to the general mass of statutes and judgments, and not confining its application merely to the Ten Commandments.* For Christ himself, when asked by one who tempted him, "saying, Master, which is the great commandment in the law?" replied, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind" (Matt. xxii. 36, 37). This command, although not in the Decalogue, Christ here says is the great commandment in the law.†

Indeed, it seems quite incomprehensible how any Sabbatarians can seriously entertain the opinion that the Ten Commandments, because they were spoken to the Israelites by the voice of God, were of superior sanctity to that of the commands spoken to them by Moses, and were on that account to survive, when all the rest of the law should be abolished. For strict investigation has,

* It should be remembered, that the Ten Commandments are, as well as all the other divine commands to the children of Israel, called statutes and judgments (Deut. v. 1, 6).

† The corresponding narrative in St. Luke's Gospel is still more to the point; for it is Christ himself who is there represented as using the phrase of "the Law," and not the interrogator who tempted him. Being asked, "Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? he said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou?" (Luke, x. 25, 26.)

as I have shown, led us to the startling conclusion, that some of the commands communicated to the Israelites by Moses have become part of the Christian code, and will therefore endure for ever; whilst some of the Ten Commandments, although spoken by the voice of God, form no part of that code, and have therefore ceased to exist, or exist only so far as any of them are in their spirit consistent with the commands selected by Christ from amongst those that were spoken to the children of Israel by the voice of Moses.

It is further argued by Sabbatarians, that if it was the intention of Christ that the Fourth Commandment should cease to be in force under the religion of his Gospel, he would himself have made that intention known. "In other matters" (says the author of "The Christian Sabbath") "Christ scrupled not to attack the inveterate opinions of the Pharisees, and if the Sabbath was to be abolished, why does he so cautiously abstain from any allusion to it, especially when occasions so often offered of announcing what was of the highest importance to have clearly published?"*

But why should it appear strange to any reader of the Gospel narratives that Christ did not clearly publish to the Jews the fact that their Sabbath was soon to be abolished, when it is evident that they sought his life for merely relaxing the rigour of the Sabbath law, by excepting from it works of necessity and cha-

* "The Christian Sabbath," by the Rev. George Holder, A.M. London, 1825, p. 211.

rity?* It is also equally evident, that until he knew that the time was fully come that he should suffer (Luke, xxii. 15), Christ withdrew from personal danger when that danger became apparent.† To have given the Jews clearly to understand, or even to have intimated to them, that the Sabbath itself was within a short time, or at any time, to be abolished, would have shocked the prejudices of the whole nation, and not only have increased the enmity of the Pharisees, but also in all likelihood have roused against him the indignation and fury of the multitude.

From whatever cause proceeding, it certainly was not within the purpose of Christ's ministry that the Jews should be forewarned by him of all the changes

* "And when he was departed thence, he went into their synagogue; and, behold, there was a man which had his hand withered. And they asked him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath-days? that they might accuse him" (Matt. xii. 9, 10). Jesus restored the withered hand, and "then the Pharisees went out, and held a council against him, how they might destroy him" (v. 14). In the corresponding narrative in St. Mark's Gospel, it is said: "And the Pharisees went forth, and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him" (Mark, iii. 6). In St. John's Gospel, in a passage before referred to, it is related that Christ healed a man who had had an infirmity for thirty-eight years, and bade him take up his bed and walk: "And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the Sabbath-day" (John, v. 5–16).

† When Christ had healed the man with the withered hand, the Pharisees, as before stated, held a council against him, how they might destroy him: "But when Jesus knew it, he withdrew himself from thence" (Matt. xii. 15).

which his coming was to effect in their religious system. When did he ever give them the slightest reason to suspect that, before long, even in the life-time of some who heard his teaching, the whole mass of their ceremonial laws would cease to be in force, and the rites of sacrifice be no longer performed? Yet did these events come to pass, and without any word having dropped from him which at the time would excite an expectation of their occurrence. It might indeed be remembered, after his death, that Christ had twice quoted from Hosea, "I will have mercy, and not sacrifice,"* and that he had told the scribe he answered discreetly, when he said that for a man to love God with all his heart, and his neighbour as himself, was more than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices.† But no one who heard these sayings would then draw the inference that Christ thereby foretold the abrogation of the ceremonial portion of the law, and the discontinuance of the sacrifices which it enjoined.

Again: it would thereafter be recollected by his disciples, and come to the knowledge of the Jews, that Christ had said to the woman of Samaria, "Believe me the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father"—"The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth" (John, iv. 21, 23).

This, it is more than probable, was language too

* Matt. ix. 13; xii. 7. † Mark, xii. 32–34.

new and mysterious to be then understood as foretelling the abolition of the rites of sacrifice. If afterwards made intelligible in that sense to the Samaritan woman or to her countrymen, during the two days that Christ abode and taught in Samaria (iv. 40); still this would have been to the Jews no annunciation of the forthcoming event. The Samaritans were a people whom they despised and hated, and with whom they held no social intercourse. Even the disciples of Christ "marvelled that he talked with the woman," so strong was their national prejudice against the people of Samaria.

Of the fact there is no doubt, that Christ did not forewarn the Jews, although he himself foreknew, that within a short period the ceremonial law would be abolished: consequently it cannot be maintained in argument, that because Christ did not make known to the Jews that he intended to abolish the Sabbath, such could not have been his intention.

There were many things of high importance which Christ left to be taught by his Apostles. His own teaching was confined to Judæa, Samaria, and Galilee, but his Apostles were sent to teach all nations,* and were after his death instructed for that purpose by the Holy Ghost.† Accordingly we find, that although Christ himself never gave any intimation to the Jews that the Sabbath command would, before long, be abrogated, St. Paul, after the death and resurrection of Christ, had authority to teach the Colossians that

* Mark, xvi. 15. † John, xv. 26; xvi. 12–14.

that command had not become obligatory on Christians, and to teach his countrymen, by his own example, that it had ceased to be obligatory upon Jews.

There remains, within my knowledge, but one other argument which Sabbatarians put forward in proof of the Fourth Commandment having never been abrogated, and certainly it is one which at first sight may appear to be very forcible. For it is founded on the declaration of Christ himself, that he had not come to destroy the law, but to fulfil it: "Think not," he says, "that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets. I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled" (Matt. v. 17, 18). Hence it is argued, that as the Fourth Commandment is a part of the law, it could not have been the Divine will that by the coming of Christ that commandment should pass away. But if this mode of construing the text be adopted in regard to the Fourth Commandment, it ought equally to be observed in regard to all the rest of the law, every jot and tittle; and this it cannot be consistently with Scripture facts.

No one denies that we have Scripture authority for believing that the ceremonial part of the law was destined to pass away on the coming of Christ, and we know as an historical fact, that the observance of it, so far as it related to sacrifice, did actually pass away after the destruction of the temple, within forty years after the death of Christ. To the Jews themselves, since that period, now nearly two thousand years ago,

the law has in this respect been a dead letter, although they still observe, with the most scrupulous exactness, all its fasts, its festivals, and its sabbaths, and other ancient ordinances.

Neither will the Sabbatarian mode of construing the text in Matthew be found compatible with Scripture facts, in regard to that portion of the law which relates to moral duties. For in the very same chapter of Matthew we read,—"Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth:* but I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also" (Matt. v. 38, 39). Now, in whatever sense this saying of Christ is to be expounded, it is undeniable that the Mosaic law of retaliation was thereby declared by him to have passed away.

Moreover, a very great change was made by Christ in the moral law relating to divorce. In the same chapter of Matthew we find him teaching this new doctrine,—"It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: but I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery" (v. 31, 32). The same doctrine is still more explicitly taught and enforced in the nineteenth chapter of Matthew, where it is related that "the Pharisees also came unto him,

* Exod. xxi. 24; Levit. xxiv. 20; and Deut. xix. 21. It will suffice to quote from the last of these references: "And thine eye shall not pity; but life shall go for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth."

tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?" Having said, in concluding his reply to this question, "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder; they say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? He saith unto them, Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery; and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery" (v. 3–9).

In these texts we see, that not only was there a change made in the law of divorce, but by necessary consequence a most material change was made in the law relating to adultery. That by these changes the disciples of Christ were of opinion that at least a jot of the law had passed away is very clear, for upon his prohibiting the putting away a wife, except for the one cause mentioned, his disciples could not refrain from remarking to him, that in such case it were well not to marry.*

That the law of Christ relative to divorce and adultery is more conducive to good morals and the happiness of social life than that of Moses, is not to be doubted; but neither is it to be doubted, that as the one has been by divine authority substituted for

* "His disciples say unto him, If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry" (v. 10).

the other, we are entitled to say of that other, It has passed away.

Even as to the Fourth Commandment, since it is certain, and is acknowledged by Sabbatarians themselves, that Christ relaxed the rigour of it in some particulars,* it may be justly said that he thereby caused some jots and tittles of it to pass away. Nay, he did more, if the Sabbatarians have his authority, as they say they have, for observing as a Sabbath the first day of the week instead of the seventh; for if this be so, Christ has changed the day which is enjoined by the Fourth Commandment for the observance of the Sabbath, and in so doing has abrogated that part of the Commandment, and another jot of it has thereby passed away. This last remark, I am aware, is but an *argumentum ad hominem*, and I use it only as such: for I maintain it was not the intention of Christ that the Fourth Commandment, or any part of it, should be observed by Christians.

Having thus pointed out various instances in which a portion of the Law has been set aside by the authority of Christ, it must be quite immaterial to the present discussion what may be the interpretation which divines put upon the words, "I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil;" or upon the phrases, "Till all be fulfilled,"—"Till heaven and earth pass." No interpretation of the text in Matthew can disprove the Scripture fact that Christ did change, abrogate, and destroy some portions of the Law.

* See *ante*, in p. 28, the extracts from Mr. Gurney's "Brief Remarks" contained in the Note.

Thus the Sabbatarian argument founded on that text, however specious it might seem, has proved, upon examination, to be utterly untenable.

Nevertheless, so strong is my position in contending for the non-obligation of the Mosaic Sabbath, that I might safely concede the fact to be, that not one jot or tittle has passed from the Law, and that consequently the Sabbath Commandment of the Decalogue still remains unrepealed and in force. For of what avail to the Sabbatarians would be this concession? I should again encounter them with the question,—Upon whom does it remain in force? and the answer, as before, must be,—Upon the Jews, and the Jews only. If any Jewish converts to Christianity, or any Judaising Christians descended from Jewish converts, were to tell me they considered the obligation of the Fourth Commandment as still imperative, my reply to them would be,—With you I will not dispute the fact; I wage no war of controversy with you and your race, who are altogether but an infinitesimal fraction of the millions that constitute the community to which we belong; and all I have to say to you in parting is: Be consistent in your belief; keep your Saturday Sabbath, and do not, because you profess to be Christians, pretend you have authority, for you have none, to hold your Fourth Commandment Sabbath on a Sunday.

No: my controversy is not with Jew-Christians; it is with the Sabbatarian portion of my fellow-countrymen, descended from heathen ancestors, from the aboriginal Britons, who, as some are of opinion, were

converted to the Christian faith in the first century, and from the Romans, the Angles, the Saxons, the Danes, and the Normans, who at different periods invaded and settled in Britain, and all of whom were converted from Heathenism more than a thousand years ago. To the millions of heathen-descended Christians among us who insist upon the present obligation of the Fourth Commandment, I say,—Show me, if you can, when it became obligatory upon heathens, or upon converts made from them. It was not made obligatory upon heathens when it was promulgated from Mount Sinai. They were excluded from the privilege of becoming subject to this and the other statutes and judgments which were then bestowed upon the chosen people. To that people only were they given, and the surrounding nations were to admire and envy them on that account. The whole tenor of the Jewish Scriptures implies that the Mosaic statutes and judgments never became obligatory upon the heathens during that period of the world's history which is comprised in those Scriptures: and as to the Christian Scriptures, far from showing that those statutes and judgments became at any subsequent period obligatory upon heathens, or upon converts from the heathens, they prove the fact to be directly the reverse. There is not in the Christian Scriptures any command, nor any teaching by Christ or his Apostles, which brings the converts from the Gentiles under the obligation of the Mosaic law. Not only is there this negative evidence, there is also the positive evidence of the divinely-inspired aposto-

lical decree recorded in the fifteenth chapter of the Acts, which expressly exempts the Gentile converts from the observance of the law of Moses, save in some few particulars that have no bearing upon the present question. Finally, there is positive evidence in the teaching and example of St. Paul, that even upon the Jews themselves the Sabbath of the Fourth Commandment had ceased to be of religious obligation.

The argument against the alleged present obligation of the Mosaic Sabbath may be summed up in a few words. We are in possession of Scripture proof that the Fourth Commandment of the Decalogue was not made obligatory upon the heathens at its promulgation—that it did not become so at any time thereafter prior to the promulgation of the Gospel—and that it did not then become obligatory on the converts made from the heathens. It is a clear deduction from these premises, that Christians descended from heathen converts cannot be under a religious obligation to observe the Sabbath of the Fourth Commandment.

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THE MOSAIC SABBATH.

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